# SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard **July 12th, 2012** 

Present: Richard Dana, Robert Ferguson, Matt Hill, , Michael Justin, Rich Laffin, Matt

Mazanec, David Riehle, Steve Trimble, Diane Trout-Oertel, David Wagner

**Absent:** Renee Hutter (excused), John Manning (excused) **Staff Present:** Amy Spong, Hilary Holmes, Renee Cohn

#### **BUSINESS MEETING**

I. Call to order: 5:05

- II. Approval of the Agenda: Commissioner Trout-Oertel motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Dana seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. Conflicts of Interest There were none stated.
- IV. Approval of the meeting minutes: Commissioner Dana motioned to approve the minutes, Commissioner Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
  - A. June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Business Meeting (approved as submitted)
  - **B. June 28<sup>th</sup>**, **2012 Public Hearing** Approved with correction: Agenda item V.A. Commissioner Mazanec voted in opposition of the motion, Commissioner Hill voted in favor of.

### V. Chair's Announcements

**A.** Chair Laffin announced that a sub-group of the Union Depot art committee will meet for the second time on Friday July 13<sup>th</sup> and again on Monday July 16<sup>th</sup> to conduct phone interviews of applicants. The committee will forward four names onto Ramsey County for a final decision. The art installation applications will come before the HPC for review in 2-3 months.

#### VI. Staff Announcements

- A. June Design Review Statistics (submitted)
- **B.** July Legislative Hearing Notification (submitted)
- **C.** Staff Amy Spong reminded the Commission that she will be in Norfolk, Virginia next week attending the National Alliance for Preservation Conference. She has registered for sustainability classes and will bring back what she learns to share with the Commission.

## VII. Pre-Application Review

A. 494 Ashland Avenue (Saint Paul Church Home), Hill Historic District, by Harriss Architects, Inc. for a pre-application review to rehabilitate the Ashland Hotel, raze the additions and construct a new addition onto the Hotel. (Amy Spong, 266-6714)

Staff read the report into the record with preliminary findings and provided a brief overview of the purpose of the pre-application process and the HPC's role in this process, as the HPC does not vote on pre-application reviews. Staff noted that SHPO's concern is with the connection of the old building to the new, rather than the overall design.

Mr. Harriss was present to discuss the proposal.

Mr. Harriss presented a comparison of the previous plan that he presented at an earlier pre-application review on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012 with a revised or "new" plan. Mr. Harriss and the developer of the project, Lance Lemieux, presented the previous proposal to a neighborhood group this past spring and the revisions were based on the concerns of the neighborhood and suggestions from the HPC at the March preapplication review.

The new proposal does not require any variances and the percentage of lot coverage has been lowered. The overall size of the project has been reduced, the main change being the bulk and scale of the project. According to Mr. Harriss, as a result of the reduction in size and number of units there is no longer a need for underground parking. The parking needs will be accommodated in the surface parking lot at the northeast corner of Holly and Mackubin, which south of the existing building, across the alley.

Mr. Harriss discussed buffering and landscaping that will occur within significant setbacks at the alley, as well as the main entrance. The main entrance will now be on Mackubin. The only portion of the building that will be below grade is the kitchen, with a service entrance on the alley. More landscaping includes terraces on the front Ashland side of the project, one at the rear and a memory care garden on the east side. There is no sidewalk access proposed for the front terraces, as stairs would be ornamental rather than functional. This lack of access is designed for the safety of the residents.

The materials have been changed and the new building will be masonry and will not longer include Hardie board and stucco. Copper paneling will be used at the front of the building.

The entrance on the west side will now be stepped back further to reveal another bay on the rear of the Ashland Hotel, which addresses a concern that the HPC had previously. The rear elevation is now stepped back more from the alley. Commissioner Laffin asked Mr. Harriss if he is working with a Landscape Architect. Mr. Harriss replied that he is. Mr. Harriss wondered about adding decorative detailing in the brick at the rear elevation where the elevator will be. Commissioner Laffin suggested that the blank wall where the elevators is helpful, it is also seen in the hotel and provides a visual break rather than being "riddled" with windows.

Commissioner Trimble asked for more information on the parking plan and if there will be an entrance from Holly. Mr. Harriss replied that they would like to keep the existing circulation and want to keep the access from Holly as there is currently a curb cut there. Commissioner Trimble noted that at the last pre-application review the surface lot was left open and with a possibility for future development.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel questioned the lack of access from the memory terraces on Ashland. Chair Laffin cautioned Mr. Harriss against design elements that are not to be used, from an architectural perspective. Commissioner Laffin asked about the height of the rail around the terrace, which Mr. Harris responded is 6 feet. Commissioner Laffin observed that the height of the rail looks more cagelike rather than a guardrail. Mr. Harriss suggested that it could be softened by making it decorative rather than "off the rack," using the tall arches and gates around the neighborhood as examples. However, the needs of the residents are

the priority. A suggestion was made to keep the east memory garden at 6 feet high and to lower the terrace rail heights. Commissioner Dana suggested that the masonry terrace walls could extend to the bottom of the first floor windows, which would mean a 2 foot wall and a 4 foot fence. Mr. Harris agreed with this.

Commissioner Dana noted that the new proposal seems a better fit than the previous, but that the massing studies are misrepresenting. Mr. Harriss agreed that the renderings are block and not necessarily accurate representations. Commissioner Wagner agreed that the new proposal addresses many of the previous concerns but that the loss of the potential for the surface parking lot to be another buildable use is a loss for the neighborhood. He suggested that the landscaping could be expanded and the parking lot moved east, to create more a a park-like strip. Mr. Harriss was concerned about the impact of moving the parking lot further east on the neighboring property to the east. Commissioner Wagner agreed.

Chair Laffin summarized that the revised building height, depth and materiality address the neighborhood as well as HPC's previous concerns with the proposal. Ms. Spong informed the Commission that the next step would be a public hearing to review the proposal and that a conditional use permit will go in front of the Planning Commission for review, also as a public hearing.

#### VIII. Old Business

A. There was none.

## IX. Committee Reports

- A. Education Committee (Ferguson, Manning, Trout-Oertel) The Education Committee did meet and is still oriented to the issue of revising the city historic preservation ordinance, Chapter 73 of the code. The committee is discussing how to make it clear what the changes are and the rationalization for them as well as prioritization of them. Ms. Spong gave an update of staff work to update the ordinance. PED Senior Planner Patricia James has volunteered to assist with the HPC text amendments to the City Council and HPC. Ms. Spong, Ms. James and Hilary Holmes met in June to discuss the 1st phase of the amendments based on the discussion at the HPC retreat. The 1st phase will pursue fees, definitions, clarifying process and language and enforcement. Ms. Spong reminded the Commission that these amendments will not introduce new concepts or policies but are to clarify the HPC process. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase will include demo delay, duty to maintain and review of all demolitions in the city. Staff will explore the possibility of changing Code Enforcement language to cross reference HPC, as well as explore any exceptions to what is referred to as the Bostrom Ordinance that prohibits the sale of Vacant Category III buildings. Ms. Spong informed the Commission of a group that is looking to meet in the near future to discuss other options for Vacant Category III historic or potential historic resource properties including Greg Donofrio, Kit Richardson, Brad Griffith, Ms. Spong and an HPC member.
- **B.** 3M Advisory Committee/Workgroups update (Trimble, Mazanec) There was nothing new to report.

## X. Adjourn: 6:22 p.m.

Submitted by: H. Holmes